



NEWS & REPORTS

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Standards change reporting of results

District's report cards provide more than A's & B's

By Allison Westfall

When report cards are released in the Bruneau-Grand View School District, students get a lot more than just A's or B's.

Four years ago, the district that serves about 450 students switched from a traditional grading system to one based on achievement standards. The result is a grading system and report card that detail a student's progress in learning what students are expected to know and be able to do.

Teachers and administrators say the approach provides clarity of what should be taught during the school year and creates greater accountability.

Parents who like the report card point to the detailed information it provides about their children's strengths and weaknesses. And there are critics who say the system still needs more standardization and explanation.

Making the grade

Under the district's standards-based system, a student gets two letter grades for a class: one for academics and one for non-academics. Both

Inside

On Page 2 - School tries student-led conferences.

On Page 3 - Answers to frequently asked AYP questions.

On Page 4-5 - State releases School Report Card for 2002-03.

grades are based on a 4-point scale, with a 4 as the highest score.

The academic grade represents the student's mastery of standards determined by tests, quizzes, assignments, and other factors.

The nonacademic grade covers other skills such as participation in class, assignments, and behavior.

A grading rubric explains the different grades and the level of mastery each represents.

Using a computer program, teachers are expected to update a student's progress each week. Students and their parents receive the detailed

reports four times a year and they can sign up for weekly progress reports.

Both class grades count for eligibility for sports and activities and are recorded on the student's transcript. The official grade point average comes from the academic grade only.

Informing parents

Bruneau-Grand View School Board Chair Karlette Merrick has three children who have graduated from the district's schools and two currently enrolled. Having seen both types of reports, Merrick said she likes the standards-based approach.

"It gives parents so much more information than they had in the past, especially the high school report cards," she said. "I love that it breaks out the academic and the non-academic. It used to be if a student misbehaved or got on the bad side of a teacher, that affected the grade. This gives a true picture of what they are doing academically."

Continued on Page 2

Group works on developing Power Standards for Idaho

A state committee is reviewing the first draft of proposed Power Standards in math, language arts, social studies, and science.

"Not all of our achievement standards are equal in importance," said Deputy Superintendent Mary Ann Ranells of the State Department of Education. "By prioritizing standards, teachers can identify those that are critical to student success and ensure they are taught in depth."

Power Standards are not new or different standards. Instead they are culled from the state's current achievement standards and represent those elements essential for student success.

The department is leading the effort to develop Power Standards as part of the Idaho Student Information Management System. Once finalized, the Power Standards will be used as some instructional and reporting pieces of (ISIMS) are developed.

Ranells said several districts already have combed the standards to identify the areas that need the most instructional

On the web

The Curriculum Ladders for Reading, Language Arts and Math are available at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/admin/standards/>

attention by each grade level.

This spring, nearly 160 teachers across the state reviewed local efforts and state standards to create the first draft of Idaho's Power Standards. The group is reviewing the draft with the goal of having a final version by fall.

The department's Technical Advisory Committee, a group of testing experts that advised the state on the first phase of its testing and accountability systems, also recommended the state consider the Power Standards.

Rather than trying to develop tests to measure every standards, the state could use the Power Standards to focus testing on those skills and information considered essential to learning.

Schools budget with 'bare bones' state funding

The Idaho Legislature approved about \$965 million in public school funding for FY 2005.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard described the appropriation as "bare bones" as some programs were reduced and others held to 2003-04 levels.

The budget holds support unit funding at the same level as FY2004 and provides about \$2 million additional funding for an online virtual charter school.

Other highlights from the budget include:

- Maintain technology funding at \$8.4 million;
- Provide no state funds for ISAT remediation;
- Increase beginning teacher salaries to \$27,500.
- Provides salary funds for increases in education but not experience.

NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT



Darin Oswald/The Idaho Statesman
Dustina Abrahamson, Fort Hall, dances with Ohio academic decathletes Andrew McMahon, 16, and Brian Konzman, 18, in a friendship circle April 13 at The Grove in Boise. The Idaho Academic Decathlon provided a Cultural Day for students arriving from across the nation to participate in the Academic Decathlon National Finals hosted in Boise.

Changes under way in AYP

The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations for schools will be different for 2003-04.

Depending on the data available from the state's testing vendor, the State Department of Education aims to have preliminary reports for schools to review in July. The 30-day appeal window will follow.

Schools identified as missing Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years will become "needs improvement" schools and must offer choice to students in the school this fall.

Changes for 2003-04 include:

New grade levels added -- AYP will include results from 3rd and 7th grade in addition to 4th, 8th, and 10th grade.

New flexibility applied -- This spring the U.S. Department of Education announced new flexibility in the areas of participation and limited English proficient students.

New ethnicity added -- To conform with federal requirements, Native Hawaiians will be reported as a separate subgroup.

Language Arts ISAT added - Schools must meet an overall target for proficiency in this subject to be deemed as making AYP. Subgroup performance will apply only if the school is using the "Safe Harbor" provision.

New information system moves to Phase I

More than 60 school districts are preparing to implement the Idaho Student Information Management System (ISIMS) as part of Phase I of bringing the new system to life in Idaho schools.

The consistent statewide information system for all schools was approved by the 2003 Legislature and the start-up cost funded by the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson.

The ISIMS project creates a statewide, student-information management system and curriculum management system.

The system will provide new resources for parents, teachers, students and all Idaho education stakeholders. The project will

ISIMS updates

When is the state's new information management system coming to your district? Check out the web for updates: isimsproject.org

include a centralized, uniform system with a host of web-based resources and tools for all users.

During the next three to five years, the new system is expected to be put in place in all the state's school districts and charter schools. System features include:

A student information management system (AAL software is recommended) that provides student scheduling, grade reporting, attendance, transcripts, progress toward graduation, and information;

A Curriculum Management System (Plato software is recommended) that provides standards based reports, progress reports, state standards, district curriculum, on-site resources, web-based resources, assessment and grading tools, and assessment history;

Data Analysis and Reporting that provides local, state, and federal reports; analysis for classroom use; disaggregated data; and research and trends.

Students take lead in parent conferences

By Heather Frye
For News & Reports

McCALL -- Deirdre Bingaman and Susan Buescher remember their parent-teacher conferences well, if not fondly.

Bingaman recalls waiting anxiously, wondering what was being said about her. Buescher recollects the frustration of deciphering her standardized test scores.

But Bingaman, a Payette Lakes Middle School language arts teacher, and principal Buescher are not putting their students through that.

Payette Lakes students are not only in on parent-teacher conferences, they're running the show.

"It's kind of a neat thing to see these students take ownership in their work and learning," Buescher said.

A few other Idaho schools, such as junior highs in Lewiston and Priest River and elementaries in Pocatello also are using student-led conferences as an

assessment tool. But they are among the minority in Idaho. Payette Lakes is the only school in the McCall-Donnelly School District to do student-led conferences.

Payette Lakes decide to try the new format after district training on assessment literacy where teachers learned about student-led conferences, Buescher said.

Switching systems was tough, she said, "but once we did it, we pretty much had total buy-in from staff."

Payette Lakes students begin the semester by setting measurable goals in each subject. Goals are based on previous grades, teacher input and the student's own assessment of strengths and weaknesses, Bingaman said.

Throughout the semester students keep track of their work and chart their academic growth in a portfolio.

At conference time, parents are sent invitations and students practice what they will discuss

On the web

The Idaho State Journal profiled student-led conferences offered in the Pocatello School District in April. The story available on the State Department of Education's website under the April 12 daily news.

with their parents.

Students and parents do not visit every teacher. Instead they meet with an advisory teacher who randomly drops in on the conferences to answer questions if needed.

"Mostly it's the kids' show," Buescher said. "It's their chance to be in charge."

Last year the school began teaching students to interpret their Idaho Standards Achievement Test scores for their parents as well.

Parents can speak with their child's teachers after the student conference.

Grades are given out last.

"We don't want parents to just fixate on the grades," Buescher said. "It's not just about grades, it's about the whole process. ...We are trying to promote communication throughout the year, not just the three or four times when grades come out."

Parents and students are surveyed after the conference to measure successes and determine where improvements need to be made. Teachers and administrators assess the survey data and comments and use them to iron out problems and "tweak" the way the conferences are held each year, Buescher said.

Some hurdles never go away, Bingaman said.

Some McCall parents don't like the student-led conferences, preferring to speak with the teacher. Others don't come at all or are frustrated when grades are not presented up front.

But the data overwhelmingly indicates that the majority of students and parents like the student-led conferences.

Bingaman said students are enjoying the greater responsibility.

"We surveyed some students last year and asked them why they liked the conferences," she said.

"They made comments like, 'I loved the fact that the teacher and my parents weren't talking behind my back.'"

McCall Donnelly Superintendent Terry Donicht said the ultimate value of the new format is increased learning.

"Student-led conferences appear to be popular with all the parties involved, but their real strength should be the likelihood that the use of these conferences will enhance student learning," he said. "It has been said that if students understand what is expected of them, they will be better equipped to meet the expectations. You are much more likely to understand the expectations if you have to explain your progress towards meeting them to your parents."

Reporting results

Continued from Page 1

Merrick said the district provided inservice to educate staff, students, and parents on how to use the new cards.

"At first it was hard. I heard from parents who said 'This is so much information I don't know what to do with it,' " she said. "Most parents don't follow what's going on or understand standards. We had to educate them about what standards are and it is a continual process. One of the good things is it has made them (parents) really realize there are standards set in the classroom and teachers are supposed to be teaching to those standards."

There are some parents in the district who don't like the system. One critic said that the teacher-established criteria for academic and nonacademic grades are too arbitrary. The critic would like to see the district return to a single grade per class.

Informing teachers

The district made the grading switch at the same time it was aligning its curriculum to the state's achievement standards.

Rimrock Junior Senior School Principal Vickie Chandler said the change was an important part of implementing standards into classroom instruction.

"I think as a staff we are much more aware of each and every standard in the curriculum," she said. "The report also provides a greater level of accountability because it shows that every standard has been covered, not just the favorites."

The two-prong approach of reporting on academic and non-academic work helps diminish "grade inflation," Chandler said, because it allows for a student's effort to be recognized separately while the academic grade reflects what the student has proven he knows and can do.

Rimrock teacher Connie Carpenter said the emphasis on standards has helped focus instruction on what students are supposed to be learning and validates classroom lessons and activities.

"We all know teachers who used to

The Bruneau-Grandview School District report cards provide information about a student progress on standards such as this sample from a U.S. History class.

U.S. History (Post WWI) 3 Quarter			
Academic Grade		Non Academic Grade	
	A- 3.43	A- 3.3	
Standard 1: Critical Thinking/Analytical Skills	3.48	Effort: Participation	3.3
Standard 5: International Conflict	3.5	Behavior: Groups	3.3
Standard 6: Cultural/Social	3.83	Effort: Assignments	3.3
A one-page grading rubric describes what each of the scores on the 4-point scale means for academic standards and non-academic factors. For example:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A "4" on a information-based standard indicates, "The student has a complete and detailed understanding of the information important to the topic."A "4" on a skill or process-based standards indicates, "The student can perform the skill or process important to the topic with no significant errors and with fluency. Additionally, the student understands the key features of the skill process."A "4" on a non-academic skills such as participation indicates, "The student participates in classroom activities and discussions without being asked."			

spend months on a project. When it was done, the student knew a few concepts very well, but there was a lot of material left uncovered," she said. "This makes all teachers accountable for the basic information all students need to know in each specific area."

Carpenter said the non-academic grade is important, too. "We hear from businesses that they want people who show up, can work well in groups, and can get things done on time. You can see that in the non-academic grade."

Switching gears

Changing systems wasn't easy even with consensus from district staff to take on the project.

"It wasn't actually the most popular thing to do because it was so different," said Chandler, who was a teacher at the time of the switch. But the teaching staff was committed to the project and avoided a year's delay in order to implement it quickly.

Carpenter said she had some concerns in the beginning. "At first, I thought I would have to rewrite a lot of what I did, but soon I could see how I could adapt my materials to this." Now she helps train teachers new to the dis-

trict.

The district also had the strong support of the school board and the administration.

"At the time this was put into place, it really made us focus as a board and support our teachers in putting this into place," Merrick said, adding that board members attended training as well.

During the past four years, the district has changed superintendents and all its school principals. Merrick said it was important for the board to find administrators who could operate in the new system.

Improving continuously

Chandler said the new reporting system is better, but more alignment is needed so no gaps exist between grades and student performance on state tests.

"We have work to do," Chandler said. "We have spent the last year analyzing data. We are trying to find which students are not doing well and get them extra help."

Merrick also said she is seeing the system changing classroom practices.

"I really like it when teachers lay out a rubric of what's expected and it is there in writing for the student to see what is

expected for them to get an A," she said. "It also makes a teacher define what is a good grade and to live by those standards. It helps take out any bias."

Chandler said the district receives lots of requests for samples of its cards. She would advise districts considering this method to do their homework. Bruneau-Grand View bought software to produce the cards that didn't meet expectations, and eventually used the district's technology coordinator to create the cards based on staff input.

Making the switch

More than 800 educators learned about standards-based reporting this spring during statewide data academies sponsored by the State Department of Education.

Merrick would recommend districts make the switch with some caveats. Staff support for the project is essential. "This is not something the school board said to do. It came from our teachers," she said.

She also notes that the district's small size likely made it easier for it to act quickly. And she added, the whole process was made possible because of grants that allowed district staff, teachers, and board members to get training.

BRIEFS

NUTRITION GUIDES AVAILABLE -- The State Department of Education released information to help schools promote healthy eating habits in children. "Idaho Recommendations for Promoting a Healthy School Nutrition Environment" is available at: www.sde.state.id.us/child.

SPECIAL EDUCATION GRADUATION INFO RELEASED -- Students with Disabilities Graduation Decision Guidance is available at: www.sde.state.id.us/SpecialEd

TECH STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS APPROVED -- Earlier this year the State Board of Education approved the standard for grades

K-8. For more information contact Dawn Wilson at 1 (208) 332-6917.

HUMAN RIGHTS CURRICULUM AVAILABLE -- The State Department of Education and the Idaho Human Rights Education Center produced this curriculum document available at: www.idaho-HumanRights.org.

SPANISH EDUCATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE -- The U.S. Department of Education has many resources for Spanish speakers and others interested in Spanish-language resources for their districts and schools.

Information is available at: www.ed.gov/espanol/bienvenidos/es.

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS GRANTS, ED INFORMATION -- The University of Idaho College of Education's Center for Evaluation, Research, and Public Service posts current information on funding opportunities and articles on education issues.

The monthly information is available at: www.uidaho.edu/ed/cerps.

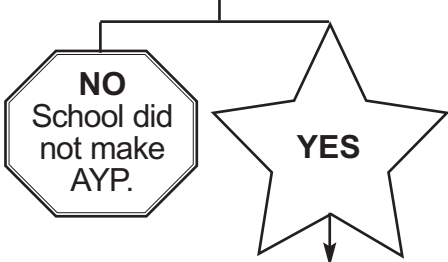
ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) 2003-04

How is AYP determined?

As part of the state’s accountability system, schools must meet separate state performance targets in three areas: student proficiency in reading and math; test participation; and targets on a third academic indicator. To determine if a school has made Adequate Yearly Progress in 2003-04, answer the following questions:

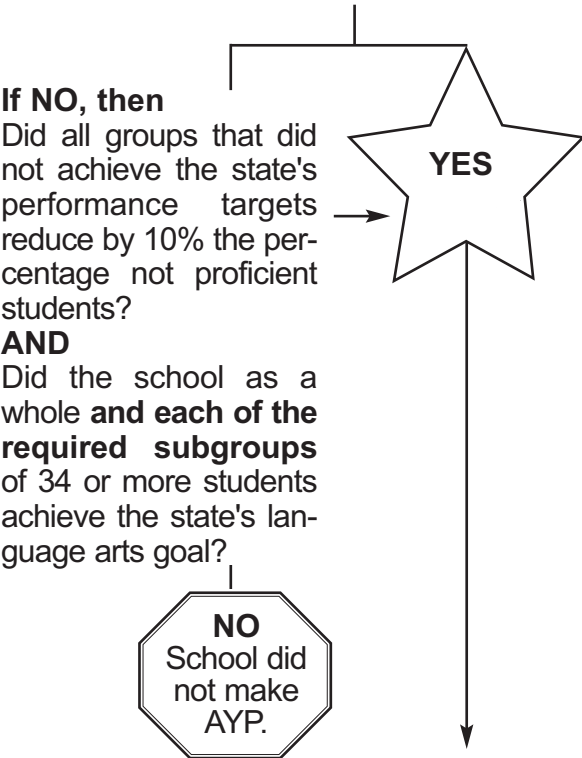
Test Participation (% tested)

Were 95% of the school’s students and each subgroup tested in reading and math? (Students must have been “continuously enrolled” in the school for their participation to count. For a definition of continuously enrolled see side article.) **New** - If a participation goal was missed, the state will average participation rates for 2002-03 and 2003-04. If the average is 95% or greater, the school makes the target.



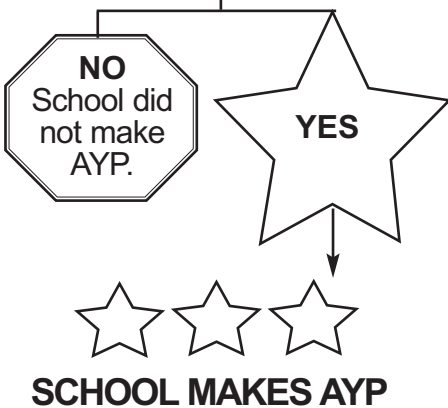
Proficiency in Reading & Math

Did the school as a whole and each of its required subgroups of 34 or more students achieve the state's targets in reading (66% proficient or better) and math (51% proficient or better)?



Third Academic Indicator

Did the school as a whole meet the state’s goal for its third academic indicator?
The for 2003-04 the goal may be met in two ways:
1. Maintain or improve on 2002-03 levels of proficient & advanced students in language arts.
2. Maintain 66% or higher proficient & advanced students for the school as a whole in language arts
New - 2003-04 is expected to be the last year for language arts to apply for **federal** accountability. The language arts test will remain a requirement for high school graduation and state assessment.



Answers to frequently asked questions

When will schools and districts get their reports?

The reports are due to schools from the state a month prior to the start of the academic year. Schools and districts should plan on having staff available in the summer to review preliminary AYP information and submit appeals if necessary.

Who gets AYP determinations?

Accredited public schools will receive AYP determinations in 2003-04. For 2002-03, some determinations were given to programs such as a night schools. The official list of schools for AYP purposes has been shared with districts. Students in programs will be counted in their home or sponsor school.

What are the targets?

For most schools, there are 41 targets to meet in order to make AYP for 2003-04. This reflects a new subgroup - Native Hawaiian - and the third academic indicator language arts.
For most schools, the only language arts goal to hit will be for “all students.” The target for the language arts % proficient or better is: remain the same as 2002-03; increase from 2002-03; stay above 66%.

What is Safe Harbor?

A school or district that misses a subgroup proficiency goal in reading or math or both can make "AYP" if:
1. It has reduced the percentage of its not proficient subgroup members by 10 percent compared to 2002-03 AND
2. The school as a whole **and each of the required subgroups** of 34 or more students achieve the state's language arts goal.

Does the school have to ask for Safe Harbor?

No. The department will include Safe Harbor factors in the formula used to make the determinations. Note: For Safe Harbor to apply, the subgroup in question must have had 34 students in 2002-03. Otherwise, the reduction in not proficient students from year to year cannot be calculated.

Will the state average participation rates?

Yes, Idaho will use the new flexibility from the federal government in this area. It would work like this:
If XYZ school misses a participation target in 2003-04, the rate will be averaged with the 2002-03 rate. If the average is 95 percent or greater the target for 2003-04 is met.
It is not retroactive, meaning it cannot be used to change 2002-03's AYP determination.

Who will be excluded from all or part of the AYP calculations?

Students who are not continuously enrolled -- The definition is this: “A student who is enrolled continuously in the same public school from the end of the first eight (8) weeks or fifty-six (56) calendar days of the school year through the end of state-approved spring testing administration period ...”

Limited English Proficient students - Idaho plans to apply a new federal flexibility policy to LEP students in their **first year in a U.S. school**. Here's how it works:

1. Reading/language - The student must take a language proficiency assessment. This allows the student to count for participation. The student will not count toward reading or language proficiency.
 2. Math - The student must take the ISAT math test. This allows the student to count for participation, but scores do not count for proficiency.
- Students using adaptations** - Idaho will continue to count the scores of these students for participation, but not proficiency.
- Incarcerated students** - Students under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Correction Department do not count for AYP. These facilities may be required to test students for other federal programs and funding.
- Sick students** - Students who are absent for the entire state-approved testing window because of a medical condition are exempt from taking the ISAT, and therefore do not count for participation or proficiency.

What are the qualifications for “needs improvement” status?

A school or district must miss a target in the **same subject area** for two consecutive years to be identified for improvement.
Examples:
1. XYZ school in 2002-03 makes all targets except LEP reading proficiency. In 2003-04, the school makes all its reading goals including LEP reading proficiency, but misses a LEP math. The school is not a “needs improvement,” school. Rather it has just not made AYP for math.
2. ABC school in 2002-03 makes all targets except white math proficiency. In 2003-04, ABC school makes the white math proficiency target and all other targets except Hispanic math proficiency. The school makes all its reading targets. This is a needs improvement school, because for two consecutive years it missed a math goal.

What consequences will “new” needs improvement schools face this fall?

Schools identified for improvement, regardless of whether they received Title I funds, must offer choice and begin school improvement planning.

What will replace language arts as the third academic indicator?

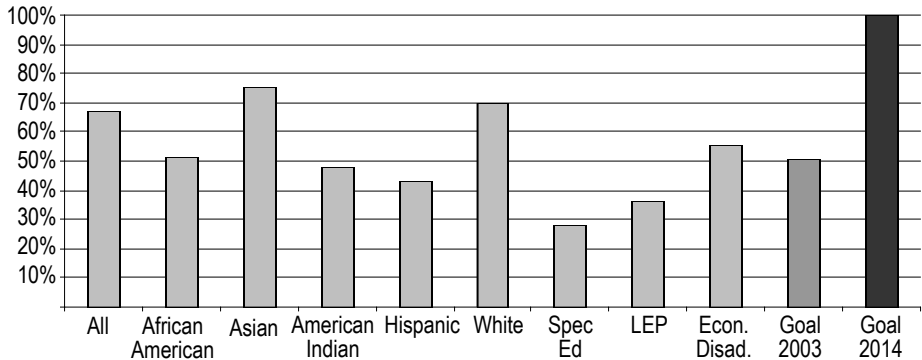
The State Board of Education approved a “growth indicator” to serve as the third academic indicator beginning with 2004-05 AYP determinations.
Under the board’s plan, districts would choose one of the options to use to measure growth:
· Increase in percentage of ‘advanced’ students on the ISAT;
· Decrease in the percentage of ‘below basic’ students on the ISAT; or
· Show a year’s worth of academic growth on a computer-based program, selected by the State Board through a bid process.

IDAHO SCHOOL REPORT CARD 2002-03

Adequate Yearly Progress Accountability Data

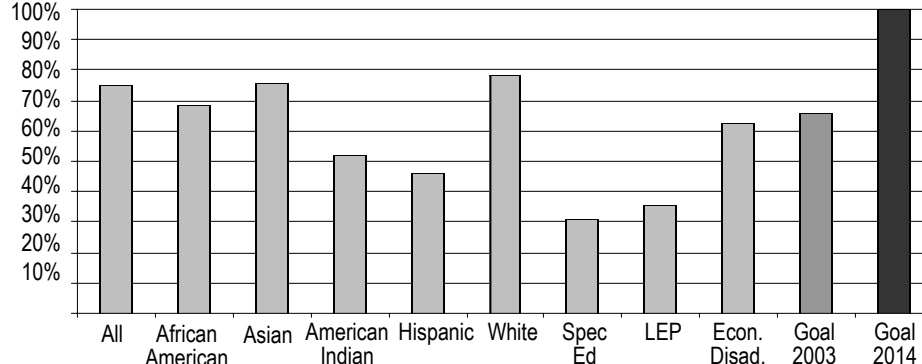
The goal for schools, districts, states, and the nation is for all students to be proficient by 2014 in reading and math as measured by tests in grades 3 through 8 and 10. In 2002-03, students in grades 4, 8, and 10 were tested using the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). The accountability information on this page combines data from the 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. Accountability reports for every school and district are available online at www.sde.state.id.us/admin/ayp.

Math: % Proficient or Better by Group 2002-03



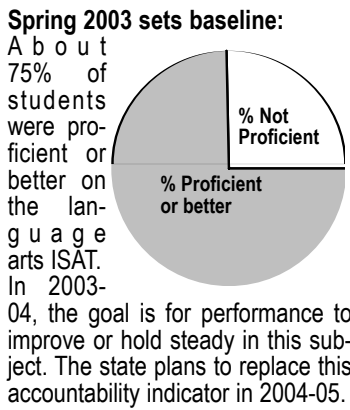
State misses some of its math proficiency goals: The 2002-03 goal for math was for 51% of students to score proficient or better. The chart above shows that the goal was missed for Native American, Hispanic, special education, and limited English proficient students. **State meets all its percent-tested goals in math:** In 2002-03, Idaho met or exceeded its goal of testing 95% of all students and 95% of students in eight groups.

Reading: % Proficient or Better by Group 2002-03

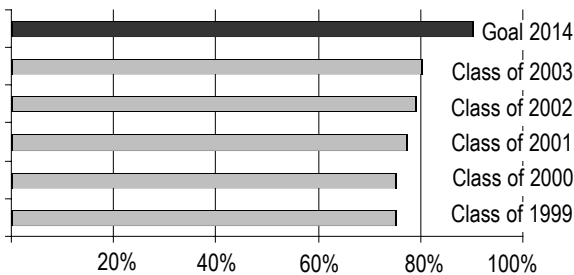


State misses some of its reading proficiency goals: The 2002-03 goal for reading was for 66% of students to score proficient or better. The chart above shows that the goal was missed for Native American, Hispanic, special education, and limited English proficient students. **State meets all its percent-tested goals in reading:** In 2002-03, Idaho met or exceeded its goal of testing 95% of all students and 95% of students in eight groups.

Language: % Proficient or Better



% of Class Graduating from High School



2002-03 Graduation rate increases to 80%: By 2014, Idaho expects 90% of students to graduate. In the future, schools will be judged on their progress toward this goal.

2002-03 Needs Improvement Schools

Idaho identified 43 schools as in need of improvement for 2002-03. All of these schools were first identified for improvement using criteria established in the federal 1994 Improving America's Schools Act. Those accountability measures applied only to schools receiving federal funds.

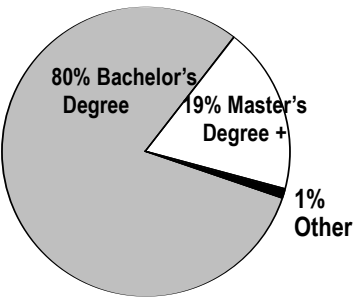
Of these "needs improvement" schools listed below, 33 made their academic goals. They remain identified because it takes two years of meeting goals to move out of school improvement.

Meridian Elementary, Meridian
A.J. Winters Elementary, Bear Lake
Riverside Elementary, Snake River
Aberdeen Elem/Middle, Aberdeen
Evergreen Elementary, Boundary County
Mount Hall Elementary, Boundary County
Valley View Elementary, Boundary County
Park Ridge Elementary, Nampa
South Middle School, Nampa
Holmes Elementary, Wilder
Middleton Middle School, Middleton
Parma Middle School, Parma
Vallivue Middle School, Vallivue
Declo Elementary, Cassia County
Mountain View Elem, Cassia County
Oakley Elementary, Cassia County
Lindy Ross Elementary, Clark County
Orofino Elementary, Orofino
Weippe Elementary, Orofino
Timberline High, Orofino
Challis Elementary, Challis
Oakwood Elementary, Preston
Harold B Lee Middle, West Side
Emmett Junior High, Emmett
Gooding Elementary, Gooding
Wendell Middle School, Wendell
Hagerman Elementary, Hagerman
Clearwater Valley Jr/Sr High, Grangeville
Terreton Elem-Jr High, West Jefferson
Jefferson Elementary, Jerome
Central Elementary, Sugar-Salem
Sugar-Salem Jr High, Sugar-Salem
Lapwai Jr/Sr High, Lapwai
Marsing Middle School, Marsing
Westside Elementary, Payette
Fruitland Middle School, Fruitland
Canyon Elementary, Kellogg
Magic Valley High-Alternative, Twin Falls
Filer Elementary, Filer
Filer Middle School, Filer
Hollister Elementary, Filer
McCall Elementary, McCall-Donnelly
Cascade Elementary, Cascade

In 2002-03, Idaho began monitoring the progress of all its public schools using criteria established in the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The first "needs improvement" schools under this new federal accountability system will be identified in the fall of 2004.

Highly Qualified Teachers

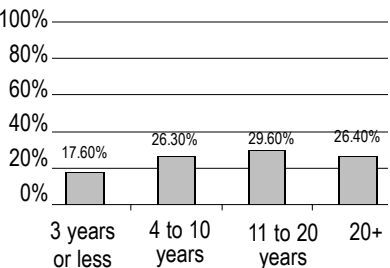
Education Background of Teachers



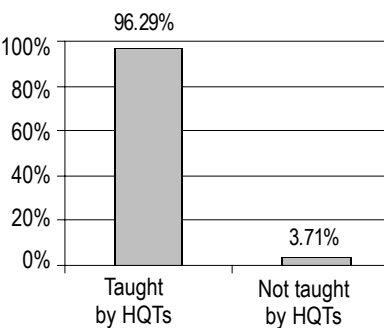
Professional Qualifications



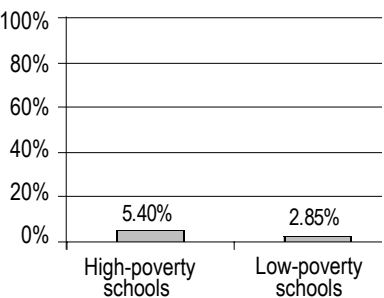
Years Of Experience Teaching



Classes Statewide Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT)



% Classes taught by HQT High-Poverty to Low-Poverty Comparison



Who is not a HQT?

In Idaho, teachers who do not hold the proper certification and endorsement for the grade level they teach are considered not highly qualified.

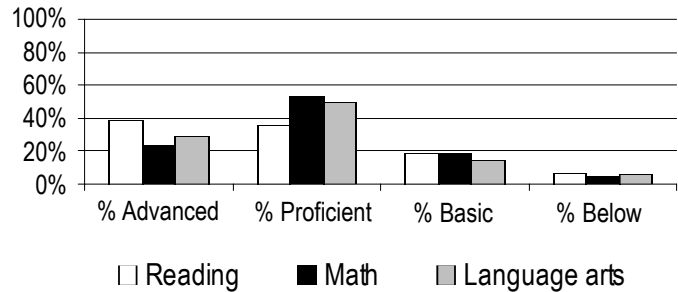
Teachers who do not hold the proper endorsements, or majors and minors, or college level coursework in the subject areas they teach are considered not highly qualified.

These individuals cannot teach without an "emergency" or limited certification such as a Letter of Authorization or a Consultant Specialist Certification from the state or they may teach under an approved misassignment.

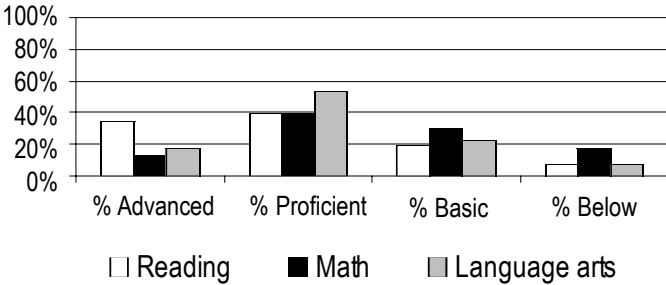
Idaho's goal is for all teachers in core academic subject areas to be highly qualified by 2005.

Adequate Yearly Progress Assessment Data

4th Grade ISAT Results by Achievement Level



8th Grade ISAT Results by Achievement Level



Assessment, accountability reports are different

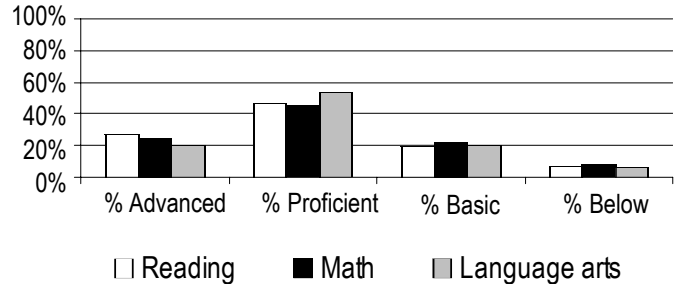
The state's accountability and assessment reports are based on the ISAT.

Reports on the assessment results of every school, district, and the state are posted at: <http://www.sde.state.id.us/admin/isat>. Pages 5 of this edition of News & Reports shows the breakdown of statewide results by specific groups of students for each grade level and achievement level.

Federal law establishes different criteria for accountability and assessment reports. In Idaho, accountability reports exclude students who are not continuously enrolled and require at least 34 students in each group assessment for a judgment to be made on the school's progress toward state goals. Accountability reports also reflect the combined total of all grade levels tested.

Assessment reports are by grade level must show the performance of all students, regardless of their time in the school. Results are reported for groups of 10 or more students.

10th Grade ISAT Results by Achievement Level



Idaho Standards Achievement Test 4th Grade Spring 2002-03

Reading					Math				Language Arts			
Group	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
All Students	38.99%	35.55%	18.59%	6.86%	23.23%	53.50%	18.57%	4.69%	29.51%	49.68%	14.90%	5.90%
African American	31.50%	43.31%	20.47%	4.72%	13.28%	53.12%	28.91%	4.69%	20.63%	60.32%	11.11%	7.94%
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	18.56%	36.08%	32.99%	12.37%	11.64%	47.60%	30.82%	9.93%	11.11%	47.22%	26.04%	15.62%
Asian/Pacific Islander	45.49%	33.91%	15.88%	4.72%	28.51%	57.45%	11.49%	2.55%	42.67%	43.10%	12.50%	1.72%
Hispanic	14.17%	35.27%	35.44%	15.12%	8.37%	48.81%	32.11%	10.70%	10.80%	47.21%	28.50%	13.48%
White	43.09%	35.63%	15.78%	5.49%	25.68%	54.35%	16.32%	3.65%	32.60%	50.08%	12.71%	4.62%
Unspecified Ethnicity	40.63%	32.73%	18.06%	8.58%	24.83%	51.22%	17.52%	6.43%	29.67%	51.20%	13.64%	5.50%
Students with Disabilities	9.06%	25.02%	38.98%	26.93%	7.19%	36.19%	37.65%	18.97%	6.58%	37.77%	33.48%	22.17%
Students without Disabilities	42.70%	36.86%	16.06%	4.37%	25.22%	55.65%	16.21%	2.92%	32.35%	51.15%	12.60%	3.89%
Limited English Proficient	7.65%	30.51%	42.31%	19.53%	4.86%	43.53%	37.51%	14.10%	6.39%	44.15%	31.46%	18%
Non-Limited English Proficient	41.17%	35.91%	16.94%	5.98%	24.52%	54.20%	17.25%	4.03%	31.13%	50.07%	13.75%	5.06%
Economically Disadvantaged	26.63%	37.12%	26.08%	10.17%	15.17%	52.09%	25.60%	7.14%	18.97%	51.40%	20.71%	8.91%
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	47.13%	34.53%	13.66%	4.68%	28.55%	54.44%	13.94%	3.07%	36.46%	48.55%	11.07%	3.92%
Migrant	8.24%	30.11%	37.99%	23.66%	4.67%	45.06%	34.83%	15.44%	5.17%	42.44%	32.66%	19.74%
Male	37.89%	34.64%	19.39%	8.09%	25.51%	52.39%	17.46%	4.65%	25.26%	50.73%	17.23%	6.78%
Female	40.16%	36.53%	17.75%	5.55%	20.82%	54.70%	19.76%	4.72%	34.05%	48.56%	12.42%	4.97%

Idaho Standards Achievement Test 8th Grade Spring 2002-03

Reading					Math				Language Arts			
Group	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
All Students	34.05%	39.14%	19.43%	7.38%	12.78%	39.60%	30.50%	17.13%	16.86%	53.89%	21.91%	7.33%
African American	21.01%	44.93%	22.46%	11.59%	6.67%	29.63%	40%	23.70%	5.88%	52.94%	32.35%	8.82%
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	14.07%	34.44%	32.96%	18.52%	4.80%	26.94%	33.21%	35.06%	6.37%	43.07%	35.21%	15.36%
Asian/Pacific Islander	35.20%	37.20%	18.80%	8.80%	18.33%	41.43%	24.30%	15.94%	26.64%	50.41%	17.62%	5.33%
Hispanic	10.11%	32.90%	36.28%	20.71%	2.72%	21.42%	36.13%	39.73%	4.40%	40.48%	35.64%	19.47%
White	37.26%	39.86%	17.32%	5.56%	13.99%	41.96%	29.86%	14.19%	18.52%	55.52%	20.08%	5.88%
Unspecified Ethnicity	31.06%	40.71%	18.35%	9.88%	13.81%	38.33%	29.29%	18.57%	11.52%	58.82%	23.53%	6.13%
Students with Disabilities	3.94%	22.32%	39.76%	33.98%	1.22%	8.84%	29.24%	60.70%	1.35%	18.74%	44.18%	35.73%
Students without Disabilities	37.18%	40.89%	17.32%	4.61%	13.99%	42.82%	30.63%	12.56%	18.46%	57.52%	19.62%	4.40%
Limited English Proficient	7.39%	27.44%	40.31%	24.86%	2.44%	17.67%	34.22%	45.67%	3.53%	34.09%	38.88%	23.49%
Non-Limited English Proficient	35.36%	39.71%	18.41%	6.52%	13.29%	40.69%	30.31%	15.71%	17.51%	54.85%	21.09%	6.55%
Economically Disadvantaged	21.13%	38.44%	27.51%	12.92%	6.63%	31.56%	34.94%	26.86%	8.66%	48.75%	29.76%	12.83%
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	40.62%	39.49%	15.33%	4.56%	15.90%	43.68%	28.24%	12.18%	21.05%	56.52%	17.91%	4.52%
Migrant	6.14%	26.34%	37.85%	29.67%	1.52%	14.97%	36.55%	46.95%	3.40%	30.10%	37.96%	28.53%
Male	32.20%	38.84%	20.35%	8.62%	13.83%	38.75%	29.86%	17.56%	12.91%	50.94%	26.16%	9.99%
Female	36%	39.46%	18.47%	6.07%	11.66%	40.50%	31.18%	16.66%	21.03%	57.01%	17.44%	4.53%

Idaho Standards Achievement Test 10th Grade Spring 2002-03

Reading					Math				Language Arts			
Group	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
All Students	26.90%	46.60%	19.02%	7.48%	24.61%	45.25%	22.32%	7.81%	19.99%	53.51%	19.95%	6.54%
African American	21.18%	40%	23.53%	15.29%	9.09%	40.91%	38.64%	11.36%	9.76%	50%	30.49%	9.76%
American Indian/ Native Alaskan	10.90%	40.28%	36.49%	12.32%	10.48%	39.05%	33.81%	16.67%	7.62%	46.67%	33.33%	12.38%
Asian/Pacific Islander	31.95%	42.11%	17.29%	8.65%	37.59%	43.23%	14.29%	4.89%	30.12%	50.97%	14.67%	4.25%
Hispanic	5.76%	34.13%	35.95%	24.16%	6.02%	35.19%	39.33%	19.47%	5.04%	39.85%	34.28%	20.82%
White	29.32%	48.09%	17%	5.59%	26.77%	46.39%	20.38%	6.46%	21.65%	55.12%	18.22%	5.02%
Unspecified Ethnicity	20.38%	44.83%	23.20%	11.60%	13.97%	46.35%	27.94%	11.75%	14.01%	48.86%	28.01%	9.12%
Students with Disabilities	2.51%	20.61%	43.43%	33.46%	1.41%	17.41%	46.44%	34.74%	1.27%	17.28%	49.14%	32.31%
Students without Disabilities	28.90%	48.74%	17.01%	5.34%	26.52%	47.54%	20.34%	5.60%	21.53%	56.50%	17.55%	4.42%
Limited English Proficient	2.73%	25.14%	41.81%	30.32%	2.84%	30.58%	44.52%	22.05%	2.90%	31.79%	40.64%	24.67%
Non-Limited English Proficient	27.88%	47.48%	18.09%	6.55%	25.51%	45.86%	21.41%	7.23%	20.69%	54.40%	19.11%	5.80%
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Non-Economically Disadvantaged	30.43%	47.95%	16.25%	5.37%	28.19%	46.47%	19.31%	6.03%	22.88%	55.25%	17.24%	4.63%
Migrant	5.19%	26.62%	33.44%	34.74%	3.91%	32.90%	41.04%	22.15%	4.55%	31.49%	32.14%	31.82%
Male	25.01%	45.74%	20.64%	8.61%	25.90%	43.34%	21.90%	8.85%	15.19%	51.81%	24.58%	8.41%
Female	28.86%	47.50%	17.34%	6.30%	23.28%	47.23%	22.76%	6.73%	24.99%	55.28%	15.13%	4.60%

Board revisits LEP education issues

Past lawsuits, committees helped shape today's services to students

For some in Idaho's minority and education communities, the creation of a new State Board of Education subcommittee focused on limited English proficient students seems like déjà vu.

The committee formed in January is charged with making recommendations to the board on how to eliminate educational performance gaps for Idaho's minority students. The group began meeting in February and is expected make recommendations to the board by the end of the year.

It is not the first time the board has asked citizens to help address the problem. Thirteen years ago, a 16-member Task Force on Hispanic Education appointed by the State Board of Education released sweeping recommendations for improving education for the state's Hispanic students. The group's proposals started with preschool and extended to college and beyond.

More than a decade since the report's release, much has changed and much remains the same for students with limited English skills.

"The majority view would be that most of the issues in the report are as valid today as in 1991," said Idaho Appellate Court Judge Sergio Gutierrez, who served on the 1991 task force. "I think there has been progress but the lack of a coordinated follow through or monitoring has yielded a result that is not to the extent we were envisioning back then. The problem has been further complicated by the fact that the Hispanic student population has really grown. We actually have a more dire need now."

Services before 1991

The 1991 task force was created after nearly a decade of legal trouble involving educational services to at-risk students.

"The system was very inadequate in having Hispanic children and parents be part of the school system," Gutierrez said, adding there were concerns about students dropping out and not performing as well as their counterparts.

Through the late 1970s and 1980s those inadequacies led to lawsuits against some school districts. In the mid-'80s, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals broadened the legal proceedings to include all of the state's limited English proficiency students.

Eventually, the state agreed to a consent decree that outlined the expectation that schools would improve identification of limited English proficient students and provide them the appropriate educational services. As one response to that agreement, the State Board of Education appointed a task force to make recommendations on Hispanic education.

"Just the idea of bringing folks together to do this created hope, a sense of relief and a positive dialogue," said Gutierrez, who was an attorney with Idaho Legal Aid at the time of the report. "That dissipates once the initial work is done."

The task force met for a year and issued a 32-page report in English and Spanish that included proposals for the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the governor, the Legislature, and other groups.

Recommendations for public schools included creating early education programs for Hispanic students, adding bilingual staff and guidance counseling, including cultural awareness training in the curriculum, and improving community and parent involvement.

The report urged state colleges and universities to hire minority staff and to create incentives to draw in Hispanic students. It asked that all teacher education programs require at least three credit hours of Hispanic cultural awareness training.

Only one of the report's recommendations requested a specific amount of money. It was for \$1 million to provide

Report Of The
Task Force on Hispanic Education
State of Idaho Board of Education, January 18, 1991

Reporte del
Comite Especial de la Educación Hispana
Mesa Directiva de Educación del Estado de Idaho, 18 de enero de 1991

In the 13 years since the report by the Hispanic Education Task Force, the state's limited English proficient student population has grown from 3,253 to 19,649.

Board decision changes LEP program

Last June, the State Board of Education voted 7 to 1 to retain federal funds for limited English students within its office.

The board's Executive Director Gary Stivers said some of the state-level federal funds will be used to hire a staff person to manage the program and ensure that funds are sent to districts.

In April, the board announced it had hired Wendy Verity, a teacher facilitator from Boise State University to manage the federal program.

Districts' federal funds will be distributed by the Office of the State Board of Education.

Board's decision eliminated the funding for a limited English proficient (LEP) coordinator within the State Department of Education.

Using federal funds, the department has had an LEP coordinator for more than 20 years who worked cooperative with migrant program and Title I staff.

The department staff member also had coordinated the state LEP funds which became available in the mid-1990s.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard objected to transferring the program to the Office of the State Board of Education.

In January 2004, she asked the board to revisit its decision when it has an opportunity to review the effectiveness of its year-long management of the program.

Panel named to examine LEP achievement

Earlier this year, the State Board of Education appointed a new subcommittee to do the following:

- Conduct a thorough review of initiatives, legislation, funding or other actions taken to address educational gaps in minority student performance;
- Identify research-based approaches to English language acquisition and improved academic performance for target populations;
- Create a consistent mechanism for sharing of the best practices in language acquisition and academic performance enhancement with local school districts; and
- Increase the number of public teachers specifically trained to meet the needs of the target population.

State board members of the subcommittee include: President Blake Hall, Secretary Rod Lewis, Paul Agidius and Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard.

Citizen subcommittee members include:

Dianne Allen, former education coordinator for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe;

Irene Chavolla, State Department of Education migrant coordinator;

Linda Christensen, Meridian School District limited English proficiency director;

Ted and Josie Garcia, restaurant owners, Rupert;

Elmer Martinez, state representative, Pocatello;

Don Pena, director of education, employment and training for the Idaho Migrant Council;

Delia Valdez, principal of Mountain View Elementary School, Burley;

Rogelio Valdez, Idaho director of disability and determinations.

school districts with matching grants for development of Hispanic language programs.

Progress made since 1991

The report led to positive changes and thanks to the task force's work, today several new state programs are in place:

- The state Legislature provides funds to school districts for education services for limited English proficient students,
- A college scholarship is available for at-risk students,
- A college scholarship is available to assist school aides and bilingual staff in becoming certified teachers,
- Teachers working with English language learners are required to hold an English as a Second Language endorsement, and
- English as a Second Language courses for parents have been expanded through the state's Adult Basic Education programs.

Gutierrez said schools employ a greater number of Hispanic and/or bilingual teachers, more opportunities and programs are available to Idaho's Hispanic and other at-risk youth, and more are going on to college and earning advanced degrees.

Idaho's education climate also has changed considerably since the task force report.

The state's number of limited English proficient students, most of whom are Spanish speakers, has exploded from 3,253 in 1991 to 19,649 in 2004.

The board also created achievement standards, consistent statewide learning goals for language arts, math, science, social studies, health and humanities.

The amount of state testing and the reporting of those results has radically changed. In 1991, the assessment program was limited to yearly testing of students in 6, 8, and 11th grades. Only the state totals for all students combined were reported.

Today, all students in grades 2 through 10 are tested at least twice a year in reading, math, and language arts.

Thanks to work by the State Department of Education, test results are reported by a variety of groups including Hispanics and limited English proficient students and information is available by school, by district and for the state.

In addition, during the past 13 years the department has trained hundreds of educators, helped districts create plans to better identify and serve limited English proficient students, and monitored the efforts of those school.

Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard said closing the achievement gap for students who struggle has been a priority of the department for the past six years.

"Our approach has been to examine the data and look for weaknesses and direct available resources to those areas that need attention," she said.

One of the most promising efforts not envisioned by the task force 13 years ago is the state's reading initiative. The 5-year-old effort uses tests to identify kinder-

garten through third graders for extra reading help. Results are beginning to show a narrowing performance gap between minorities and other students.

Continuing concerns

The 1991 task force was chaired by Sam Byrd, a diversity consultant based in Boise, who also serves as a board member of the Council on Hispanic Education, a non-profit organization working to improve the educational status of Latino and English language learners. Byrd said he is frustrated that the pace of change has been slow.

"Minority student performance has been an issue in Idaho for over 25 years. This is certainly not a new issue," he said. "There were more than 100 recommendations made. Three or four saw fruition."

Since serving on the original task force, Byrd said he has served on several more. Each subsequent committee has recycled or repackaged the recommendations of that earlier report, he said. The 1991 Task Force on Hispanic Education's report was in fact a repackaging of two reports compiled for the board the year before, Byrd said.

Byrd was not appointed to the new committee, but has filled in for a member during the first two meetings. He views the new effort with some skepticism.

"We don't need any more studies, what we need is for the State Board of Education to provide the leadership and support necessary to implement effective educational initiatives that will close the academic gap between these students and their peers," he said. "We need to hold the State Board of Education accountable for how effectively it uses the millions of dollars of state and federal funds it currently receives to educate these students."

Others hope that the information provided by the state's expanded assessment program will help fuel change.

"It's clear from testing results that our minority students are falling behind," State Board of Education President Blake Hall said in announcing the formation of the committee.

"Greater attention must be given to these student populations so that learning gaps between minority and Caucasian students are eliminated. The State Board is committed to doing all it can to help our minority students with limited English proficiency succeed."

Hall said he had confidence in the committee members' ability to evaluate our current system and to recommend changes.

No Child Left Behind

In addition to years of reports and recommendations to review, the new committee will be able to build its recommendations on several projects initiated by the State Department of Education fueled by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

NCLB spells out specific actions states must take in order to continue receiving federal funds. In March, State Department of Education staff reviewed with the committee new standards for English language learners that had been developed this past year.

Department staff members also worked with several western states to earn a federal grant to develop an English language assessment. When completed, the test will be used to measure the progress of students in acquiring English and the progress of school programs in assisting these students reach that goal.

Schools will be held accountable for the performance of limited English students and other minority groups through the Adequate Yearly Progress monitoring.

The renewed attention by the state and federal government to the issue is encouraging to many, who fear the consequences for students who struggle.

"What we end up with is a larger number of these youth going through our criminal justice system if we don't act," Gutierrez said.

"What becomes the alternative is the gang lifestyle. ... Today I am more alarmed about our inability to meet these needs because the consequence is the loss of talent and lives."

HEALTHY KIDS

Schools team up to fight obesity

Southwest District Health's Division of Nutrition and Health Promotion worked with teachers, staff, and K-2 students at Lincoln and Washington elementary schools in Caldwell on a special program designed to address the issue of child obesity.

"The Me I Want To Be" provided students the opportunity to participate in exercises that promoted the importance of having a positive body image, eating healthy foods, and being physically active.

Israel Espinoza, principal of Lincoln Elementary, endorsed the program.

"Obesity is a problem that is showing up even at the elementary school level," he said. "It is imperative that our kids begin to have their consciousness raised when it comes to their wellness," he concluded.

The project objective is threefold: to show children age K-2 the connection between eating a variety of food and growing strong and healthy; to reinforce self-esteem and sensitivity toward various body sizes and shapes; and to promote increased exercise by providing ideas for safe and easy activities that are adaptable to



Students at Washington Elementary School in Caldwell work on a lesson about making healthy food choices.

any environment.

According to Jeanette Jones, Division Director of Nutrition and Health Promotion Services for Southwest District Health, "Children who learn to love physical activity and fitness, and are taught to eat right at an early age, are almost sure to develop healthy lifestyles."

Nancy Fortner, physical education teacher at Washington elementary, said that the students especially liked Power Panther, who is a "spokescharacter" that conveys nutrition and physical activity messages in a fun and non-threatening way.

"The students really enjoyed the program and learned what is healthy to eat as well as the importance of exercise," she said.

The health district worked with students and teachers in their classrooms, as well as during their physical education periods. The program worked with second graders last fall and with kindergarten and first graders in April.

Jones praised the teachers and school personnel of both schools. "They were all great to work with, and we appreciate their efforts in making this program so effective."

Schools urged to use nutrition guidelines

The State Department of Education and the State Board of Education have endorsed new guidelines to help improve children's health.

"Idaho Recommendations for Promoting a Healthy School Nutrition Environment" were mailed to schools this spring and are available at:

<http://www.sde.state.id.us/child>.

These guidelines were developed by an organization called Action for Healthy Kids-Idaho, whose statewide membership is made up of school administrators, teachers, school food service, parents and students.

Action for Healthy Kids is a national effort led by First Lady Laura Bush in an effort to improve children's health. The document outlines how schools can offer a more healthful environments for students.

Some of the recommendations are:

Administrators

- Develop a Healthy School Nutrition Environment Policy
- Offer healthful foods and snacks schoolwide
- Change vending ma-

chine offerings to healthier choices

- Encourage organized physical activities during recess

- Offer physical education at least three times a week

Teachers

- Offer non-food rewards to students
- Be a role model to your kids

- Eat with your students once in a while

- Integrate nutrition and physical activity into your regular curriculum

- Take physical activity breaks in the classroom throughout the day

- Provide parents guidelines for bringing in treats and snacks

Parents

- Be role models for your kids

- Set limits

- Stock your homes with healthy foods

- Make fruits and vegetables easily accessible

- Limit fast food meals

- Be physically active with your kids

The research on children's health creates a call for action, said Seanne Safaii of the State

Department of Education's Child Nutrition Program.

Safaii said the number of obese adolescents is reaching epidemic proportions.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General's report "Overweight and Obesity Fact Sheet: Overweight in Children and Adolescents," in 1999, 14 percent of U.S. adolescents aged 12-19 were overweight. That represents a three-fold increase in 20 years. In the last 15 years, milk consumption in schools has decreased by 29 percent and pop consumption has increased 1,100 percent.

Safaii said research indicates that overweight adolescents have a 70 to 80 percent chance of becoming obese adults. Health problems related to excessive weight gain include Type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease and bone disease.

Given these statistics, Safaii said, schools can help by going beyond simple health education classes to implement more comprehensive efforts to help students make healthy decisions and provide a culture of health.

CALENDAR

JUNE

June 9-10

Third Grade Reading Academy, Lewiston Red Lion, 621 21st St., Lewiston. For information, contact Valerie Fenske at (208) 332-6802, or vfenske@sde.state.id.us

June 7-10

Idaho Youth Summit, Lutherhaven, Coeur d'Alene. For information contact Amy Bartoo, Idaho Drug-free Youth, at 1 (208) 664-4339.

June 13-18

Art Powered Schools, Albertson College of Idaho, Caldwell. Information is available at: <http://164.165.152.62/survey/humanities/arts.htm>

June 14-17

Idaho Youth Summit, Grand Targhee eastern Idaho. For information contact Amy Bartoo, Idaho Drug-free Youth, at 1 (208) 664-4339.

June 14-16

Beginning Student Assistance Program/Support Group training, Red Lion Downtowner, Boise. For information contact Nelma Plante, State Department of Education, 1 (208) 332-6960.

June 17-19

Advanced Student Assistance Program/Support Group training, Red Lion Downtowner, Boise. For information contact Nelma Plante, State Department of Education, 1 (208) 332-6960.

June 17-18

State Board of Education meeting, University of Idaho, Moscow. More information is available at www.idahoboardofed.org.

June 18-19

IRIS - Idaho Reaches Into Space Workshop, East Valley Middle School, Nampa. Information is available at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/instr/uct/science/iris/index.html>

June 21-22

IRIS - Idaho Reaches Into Space Workshop, Moscow/Lewiston. Information is available at: <http://www.sde.state.id.us/instr/uct/science/iris/index.html>

June 21

Pupil Transportation Driver's Competition/Rodeo, Idaho Association of Pupil Transportation. For information contact Lanette Daw, Specialist at 332-6851, Ldaw@sde.state.id.us

June 22-24

29th Idaho Pupil Transportation Summer Conference, Red Lion Hotel Downtowner, Boise. Registration form available at www.sde.state.id.us/finance/transport

June 24-25

IRIS - Idaho Reaches Into Space Workshop, Payette

Lakes Middle School, McCall. Information is available at: <http://www.sde.state.id.us/instr/uct/science/iris/index.html>

June 23-24

Idaho Association of School Administrators Conference, DoubleTree Riverside, Boise. For information, contact the Idaho Association of School Administrators at 1 (208) 345-1171, or visit: www.idschadm.org.

June 23-24

Third Grade Reading Academy, Twin Falls Red Lion, 1357 Blue Lakes Boulevard. For information, contact Valerie Fenske at (208) 332-6802, or vfenske@sde.state.id.us.

June 24-25

Professional Standards Commission meeting, Boise. For information contact Mary Jane Markland of the State Department of Education at 1 (208) 332-6884.

June 27-30

Professional-Technical Educators' Summer Conference. Boise. For information, contact Nancy Spratt at (208) 334-3216, or visit: <http://www.ptes.state.id.us/sumconf/sumconf.htm>.

June 28-29

IRIS - Idaho Reaches Into Space Workshop, Gate City Elementary, Pocatello. Information is available at <http://www.sde.state.id.us/instr/uct/science/iris/index.html>

JULY

July 9-10

Driver Education and Training Conference, Doubletree Hotel, Boise. Sponsored by the State Department of Education. For information call 332-6850.

AUGUST

Aug. 2-6

Idaho Math Academy, Idaho State University, Pocatello. More information is available at: www.sde.state.id.us/idahomathacademy/default.asp

Aug. 3-4

Reaching for Excellence Across the Curriculum, 4th Annual Standards Conference, Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa. Sponsored by the State Department of Education and NNU. More information is available at: www.nnu.edu/academics/continuinged/standards/standards.html

Aug. 5

State Department of Education's annual meeting with superintendents and charter school directors, Nampa Civic Center, Nampa. For information contact Susanne Daniels at 1 (208) 332-6810.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Dr. Shirley Spencer, the Adult Basic Education and GED coordinator for the State Department of Education, retires in June.

"Shirley has been a valuable asset to the department and the adult learners in the state," said Marilyn Howard, Superintendent of Public Instruction. "She will be missed."

Spencer joined the department 16 years ago. She works with six adult education centers in the state.

Prior to joining the department she was director of the Western Wyoming College Adult Learning Centers.

Spencer has received several awards throughout her career including the "Outstanding Service to Adult Literacy Award," from the Idaho Lifelong Learning Association.

The Office of the State Board of Education has several new staff:

Sandra DeKlotz was hired as federal programs manager, a new position. Previously, she worked for the State Department of Transportation and the Department of Law Enforcement.

Karen Gustafson joins the staff as its plans and policy officer. Previously she worked for the State Department of Administration.

Jeff Shinn is the board's chief fiscal officer. Previously he worked for the state's Division of Financial Management.

Wendy Verity, a teacher facilitator at Boise State University in Boise, joins the staff to work on Title III and limited English proficiency issues.

Luci Willits joins the staff as its communications officer. Previously she worked for U.S.

Rep. Mike Simpson.

In April, the State Board of Education elected the following new officers: **Rod Lewis** of Eagle, president, **Laird Stone** of Twin Falls as vice president and **Milford Terrell** of Boise as secretary.

In January, **Tom Tracy** joined the state Division of Professional-Technical Education as Health Professions Program Manager.

Dr. Donald Eshelby, Trade and Industry Education Program Manager for the state Division of Professional-Technical Education, was awarded the 2003 C. Thomas Olivo Outstanding Service Award at the National American Career and Technical Education Conference in Orlando.



NATIONAL HONORS -- From left to right, Patricia Waddell, Rigby High School math teacher, Dr. Marilyn Howard, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Edward Richards, Filer High School science teacher pose for a picture after a National Academy of Science ceremony honoring excellent state science and math teachers.

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Lessons learned from needs improvement schools

By Allison Westfall
Public Information Officer
State Department of Education

Is your school ready to talk about accountability in the No Child Left Behind era? That was the topic of conversation at a one-day conference on communications sponsored by the Idaho School Public Relations Association and the State Department of Education.

The conference featured a panel of educators and communicators who shared the lessons they learned after being publicly labeled "failing" schools when NCLB first took effect two years ago.

Here are some the lessons the panelist shared:

Know why your school is on "the list" -- Two years ago, the U.S. Department of Education caught states and districts off guard by announcing that hundreds of schools were "failing" and that parents could exercise their new "choice" option to leave the schools. At that time, schools did not know why they were identified or what the consequences were.

Educators should know what criteria schools are being evaluated on and how their school stacks up.

Know what your school is doing to improve -- Being identified for improvement provides an opportunity for educators to highlight what efforts are under way to improve and to show-



A group of educators discuss leverage points for getting parents involved in schools and to inform them about reform efforts during a communications workshop. The one-day conference held in April was sponsored by the Idaho School Public Relations Association and the State Department of Education.

case successes.

Focus on staff morale -- Being labeled as needing improvement can be discouraging to staff members, especially those who have been working to implement reforms and are seeing improvements.

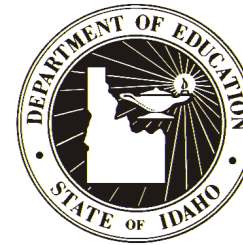
Make sure staff know the criteria for evaluation of the school, the rea-

sons the school has been identified, and how they contribute to improvement efforts.

Keep parents in the loop -- Use required parent involvement policies, school report cards, and notification letters to inform parents of efforts to improve learning and let them know how to get involved.

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NEWS & REPORTS

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A message from the state superintendent

Standards lead us in new directions

Several State Department of Education staff members recently heard a pro-voucher researcher talk about the "failing" public schools. Not surprisingly, they weren't impressed.

Nor am I -- and this issue of "News & Reports" makes it clear why. Our schools are vibrant, energetic, creative places where students, teachers, and administrators are challenged every day. Anyone who thinks the word "failing" is an appropriate adjective simply hasn't been paying attention.

The two-page "Idaho School Report Card 2002-03" on pages 4 and 5 shows how far we have come over the past few years in our move to transparency in reporting. The information here is just the tip of the data iceberg, but it shows our commitment to making sure the public is fully aware of how we judge school improvement progress.

In fact, those of you who have heard me urge educators to "learn to love the data" won't be surprised when I say that our preference for defensible data over anonymous anecdote is at the heart of our reporting efforts. Everyone can find that one story that illustrates a classroom problem, but the key to meaningful improvement is mapping real results carefully, objectively, and over time.

When the No Child Left Behind Act was first implemented, I often heard objections to the school report card requirement. The most frequently-voiced concern was that the required report elements were selective and certainly would not tell the full story of classroom, school, or district performance. That's a valid concern.

But in this case, the pros outweigh the cons. It's an old public relations cliché to say that there's no such thing as a bad story, but like most clichés it has an element of truth: even a bad report can start a good conversation about what those scores mean, how they should be interpreted, and how the infor-



mation will be used.

And look at how our schools have responded: with student-led parent conferences, with development of Power Standards, with new ways to measure and report on student achievement, and with workshops and seminars on everything from how to bring academic standards to life in the classroom, to how to best communicate findings to parents and patrons. This News & Reports issue is full of ideas.

It takes courage to step off into a new approach to improving performance and both patience and professionalism to recognize that you can't measure accurately if you don't know where you started.

For example, when the first scores from the Idaho Reading Initiative were reported a few years ago, there was a good deal of hand-wringing over low

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Groups work to improve children's eating habits.

Calendar of events.

marks and what they meant for young readers. Today we can look back and see how over time, student reading skills improved from that initial baseline.

We are still early in the NCLB implementation process, and still establishing our baselines in the NCLB-required reporting areas.

My prediction is that we will follow the proven course of collecting good information, analyzing strengths and weaknesses, and putting what we have learned into effect where it matters: in the classroom.